

eGovernment Service Certification Guidelines

Following are the certification guidelines for state of Montana eGovernment services. Language referring to these guidelines is to be included in all work orders and contracts for eGovernment services unless an exception to the *E-Government Service Certification* standard has been granted. The Information Technology Services Division (ITSD) will use these guidelines (and all other applicable state standards) when considering certification. Certification provides the agency with the appropriate and applicable benefits listed below (please note, some of the benefits may require a work order or agreement with the state's eGovernment services contractor).

Benefits of certification:

- Appropriate visibility on mt.gov
- The state's single login service, ePass Montana
- The state's payment portal (requires a work order)
 - Credit Cards
 - Debit cards
 - Electronic checks (electronic funds transfer)
- eGovernment services help desk assistance including Live Help (may require a work order)
- Marketing assistance when applicable (development of brochures, publications, press releases, radio actualities, scripts for public service announcements, etc.)
- Inclusion in promotional events for mt.gov (trade shows, conferences, industry association events, fairs, etc.)

Guideline applicability:

- **Definition of an eGovernment Service (and what these guidelines apply to):**
An eGovernment service is an application, or series of applications, on the Internet that provides a specific service to a citizen or business. The application(s) are interactive and/or transactional-based in nature, meaning that information is collected or provided by the customer and service is then delivered (a transaction is completed). Examples are: web enabling business systems and allowing customers to enter in their own search criteria and then receiving the information they seek from those systems; filling out a tax form online (where they are able to submit it online) and paying their taxes; purchasing goods and paying for them from the shopping cart; renewing and paying for permits, licenses, or fees; any service using the payment portal. The goal of an eGovernment service is to provide a complete end-to-end solution to the customer whenever possible, meaning the customer has provided all necessary information and payment has been collected and the State has delivered the service including all necessary information and documentation to the customer. When implemented in this fashion, both the State and the customer should gain efficiencies.

- **What these guidelines DO NOT apply to:** Static or informational web pages, .pdf's, or documents; downloadable documents or forms (including forms the customer must send in or e-mail); search engines or functions providing searches on static web pages or documents; systems used primarily for the purpose of finding web content or documents published on the web; intranet services or applications; simple one page forms submitted online requesting information, submitting a complaint, or similar function; prepackaged or off-the-shelf software that is not customizable

Elements required in an eGovernment service:

- Naming the service
 - Select a name that will make sense to a customer and has meaning on its own independent of the agency (a customer should not have to know the organizational structure of government and what agency provides the service in order to find it)
 - Do not use “throw away” words such as Internet, Online and Montana, the customer already knows they are online on Montana's Internet website
 - Use “service” not “application”; one “service” can be made up of many “applications”; the customer knows they need a service from state government, “application” often has no meaning and may be confusing for non-technical people
- Selecting the service URL
 - If the agency will be advertising the service using the service name, the service should have its own domain name (i.e. <http://ui4u.mt.gov>)
 - If the URL name must be an abbreviation, select one associated primarily with the service, not the organization or agency providing the service
- The service home page shall be designed and limited to an 1024 x 768 pixel display (no scrolling either vertically or horizontally); all pages should adhere to this element whenever possible
- The service should not require the client or customer to download anything to use the service (i.e. special software or.dll's); products such as Adobe Acrobat and Real Audio are acceptable as they are standard practice
- “Clutter-free” pages (leaving sufficient white space)
- Accomplish the service in as few steps as possible for efficiency
- Use the approved footer (reference <http://www.mt.gov/itsd/policy/software.asp>)
 - All home pages must have a footer, the footer is optional on subsequent pages
 - Footer links in order from left to right:
 - Online Services
 - Department homepage
 - Division homepage or other agency preference (Optional)
 - Privacy & Security (<http://www.mt.gov/itsd/policy/policies/ENTINT030.asp>)
 - Accessibility (<http://mt.gov/discover/disclaimer.asp#accessibility>)
 - Contact Us (Contractor or agency help desk - must include address, telephone number, and e-mail address in compliance with 2-17-552, MCA)

- Title tags on all pages
 - Service name, then a hyphen, then agency name (i.e., Voter File Online – Montana Secretary of State)
- White background on all pages (special highlight boxes may use a background)
- Compliant with Section 508 and 18-5-601 – 18-5-605, MCA
 - Descriptive alt tags on every graphic
 - Run a validity test using Bobby or Ask Cynthia
- If collecting payment electronically, the State's existing payment portal must be used (requires a work order)
- Assistance buttons:
 - Consistent location – top right corner below the banner
 - Buttons should follow this order (use those that are applicable):
 - Instructions (left)
 - Fees (center #1)
 - How Do I? (center #2)
 - Search Tips (center #3)
 - Feedback (right)
 - Navigation at the bottom of the assistance pages should include a "Back" button which will take the user back to where they were prior to accessing the page and may also include a "Home" button which will take the user back to the home page of the service
- Button names
 - Home page: Start, Submit, Continue, Login, Find, Search
 - Interior pages: Home, Search again, Update, Reset, Back, Print, and those for the home page
- A service typically should open in a new browser window when its link is activated
- Demonstration
 - A demonstration should be created for each service when:
 - It lends value to the customer
 - It is a complex service
 - It is a secured service
 - The demonstration must have the "DEMONSTRATION" banner on every page of the demonstration
 - A demonstration is not necessary when it is a simple service with few pages and does not require a login
 - The "Try the Demo" icon is to be placed:
 - In the bottom left corner above the footer of the service
 - At the top of the Instructions page
 - The demo needs to contain navigation that easily gets the customer back to the real service